



# SPINAL COURIER

**SPINAL CORD**  
COMMISSION

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## New Little Rock Case Manager

Daniel Cook accepted the Little Rock Case Manager's position and began his employment with the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission (ASCC) in June, 1997. Daniel is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and completed his internship at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) prior to assuming his duties with the Commission.

Daniel obtained his B.S. in Psychology from the University of Central Arkansas. This May he earned his Masters degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Arkansas with an emphasis in Deafness/Hearing Impairment.

While completing his internship with the VA, Mr. Cook had the opportunity to work with individuals with spinal cord injuries. "I have become aware of and am constantly learning more about the unique needs of these individuals," Daniel observed. He is a member of the American Counseling Association and American Rehabilitation Counseling Association.

ASCC believes Daniel's background and training will assist the agency in providing quality services to the individuals on his caseload. He has already begun meeting some of these clients



and is looking forward to meeting the rest.

Please join ASCC in welcoming Daniel aboard! ☺

## SBAA Seminar

The Spina Bifida Association of Arkansas (SBAA) will be holding their twelfth annual seminar on Saturday, October 11, 1997, at the Brandon Conference Center at Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock.

Keynote speakers will include Dr. Don Lollar from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, GA, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Commissioner Bobby Simpson and Grover Evans, Director of the Arkansas Disability Determination Division.

For additional information, contact the SBAA office at **501-851-3351**. ☺

## Upcoming Fall 1997 Mini-Conferences

Most people with spinal cord disabilities are interested in learning more about their disability, secondary conditions and new treatment options, but not everyone can get to Little Rock, even once a year for the ASCC conference. Therefore, in 1997 two mini-conferences have been scheduled to allow educational opportunities in other parts of the state.

The Northwest Arkansas mini-conference will be in Fort Smith on Wednesday, October 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Health-South Rehabilitation Hospital of Fort Smith. The South Arkansas mini-conference will be in El Dorado. It is tentatively scheduled for Friday, September 26,

at the Rehabilitation Center of Southeast Arkansas.

Each mini-conference will include topics such as SCI research, urology, stress management, skin problems and pain management. Each mini-conference will also include opportunities to see new equipment and medical supplies.

All ASCC clients and health care providers in these regions will receive mini-conference brochures and registration forms in early September. If you do not live in Northwest or South Arkansas and would like to be added to the mini-conference mailing list, contact Dee Ledbetter at **1-800-459-1517** or **501-296-1784**. ☺

## SPINAL COURIER

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## BUCKLE UP!

### With Thanks

ASCC accepts tax deductible donations. The generosity of the many individuals and families who over the years have made memorial donations is greatly appreciated. Contributions are used to assist our clients through purchases of equipment and educational resources.

If you would like to make a contribution, please contact the Commission at **1-800-459-1517, 501-296-1788 / 501-296-1794** TDD, or send your donation to:

AR Spinal Cord Commission  
1501 North University, Ste. 470  
Little Rock, AR 72207



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## SPINAL COURIER Letters

Questions • Suggestions • Directions • Answers

### Summer Fun in Memphis

Dear Editor:

For summer activities, ASCC clients in Crittenden and St. Francis counties have the resources of the Raymond Skinner Recreational Service Center in Memphis, TN. The Skinner Center features an accessible pool area, a billiard

table and other summer activities and events for people with disabilities.

Certain restrictions do apply, so please call the Skinner Center at **901-272-2528** for complete details and a summer schedule of events.

*Sharon McCoy*  
*ASCC Case Manager*  
*West Memphis, AR*

### From the Director

Over the past few months there has been a lot of controversy about the memorial to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Most of us know that he had polio as a young man, sustained paraplegia and was never able to stand unassisted after that. He used long leg braces, crutches and a wheelchair for mobility. He was elected president four times. He was almost never seen in public in his wheelchair. He did not want to call attention to his disability. (I guess he was lucky, there was no television or "investigative reporters" back then.) He led our country out of the Great Depression, developed work programs that are models for today and led the nation through most of World War II. But did you know he also started the March of Dimes?

He asked that, if a memorial should ever be made to him, it should be no bigger than his desk. The memorial, in Washington, DC, is seven acres large! Nowhere in the memorial can you actually see FDR in a wheelchair (one statue of him in a large cape has a chair with small wheels, if you look real close).

Disability advocates are angry. They believe the fact that the president had a severe disability should be included (perhaps celebrated) in the memorial. Historians disagree. Even the Roosevelt family is divided in their opinion. I have mixed emotions about it myself.

What do you think? Should a statue or some symbol be added to the memorial to show FDR in his wheelchair? Or should the memorial show him as citizens of his time saw him? **Let me know what you think.** We'll take an informal poll of Arkansans. Drop me a note with your vote or opinion and I'll tally them up and report back next issue. Maybe we'll send our results to Washington! Let me hear from you.

Try to stay cool this summer!

*Cheryl L. Vines*

**Send your vote to Cheryl at 1501 N. University, Ste. 470, Little Rock, AR 72207 or to our e-mail address: [arkscs@aol.com](mailto:arkscs@aol.com)**

# Dale Tabor — Mouthstick Artist

Dale Tabor is a 48 year old mouthstick artist living in Harrison with his wife, Becky. He had his carport converted into a studio where he prefers to paint landscapes and outdoors subjects such as birds, although he is willing to paint any subject requested.

In 1969 he was involved in a motor vehicle crash which resulted in incomplete tetraplegia at the C2-3 level. While at Texas Institute for Rehabilitation and Research in Houston, his artistic talent was noticed and he received a scholarship to the Charles Glass School of Art in Houston.

Since his art studies in Houston, Dale has produced many beautiful pieces. At the present time Dale is working on a large painting (34" x 48") of a wild turkey. He plans to enter this painting in the art contest at the annual Turkey Trot Festival in Yellville, AR.



**Mouthstick artist, Dale Tabor, working in his studio in Harrison, AR.**

Dale is a student member of an international organization of over 400 artists, the Association of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists (AMFPA), which has reproduced some of his paintings for calendars and greeting cards. To keep his skills up-to-date, Dale continues to take private art lessons with an art instructor at Bergman High School

in Boone County who has encouraged him to expand his painting mediums from acrylics to oils.

If anyone is interested in seeing his work or would like to talk with him about the challenges of artwork with a mouthstick, Dale asks you to contact him at his studio, **870-427-8262**. ☺

## ASCIA Offers Scholarships

The Arkansas Spinal Cord Injury Association (ASCIA) recently announced their 1997 scholarship program. ASCIA will award two \$500 scholarships this year. Applications are now available and must be submitted by August 22, 1997, for consideration.



In order to be eligible for the scholarships, the applicant must:

1. Have a spinal cord disability,
2. Be enrolled for the 1997-98 academic year in a college, university or vocational-technical training program, and
3. Be enrolled for a minimum of nine (9) units for the fall semester/quarter.

Recipients may receive an ASCIA scholarship twice. ASCIA reserves the right to request additional financial information during the selection process.

"One of the primary goals of ASCIA is to assist Arkansans with

spinal cord disabilities in achieving their goals and becoming self-sufficient," stated ASCIA President Dale Dahmen Jones. Since 1993, ASCIA (an organization run by and for people with spinal cord disabilities) has awarded \$10,000 in scholarships to deserving individuals with spinal cord disabilities.

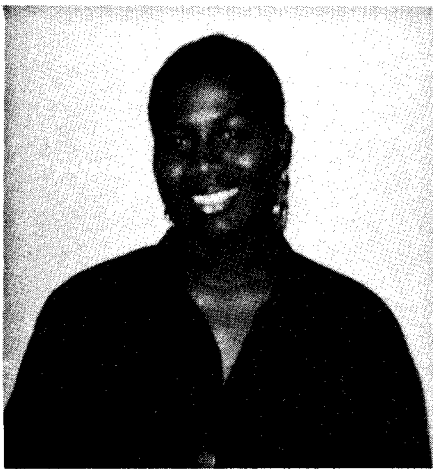
To obtain a scholarship application, contact Scholarship Chairperson Cheryl Vines at **501-296-1788** or **1-800-459-1517**, or contact your ASCC Case Manager.

Remember, all applications must be received by **August 22, 1997**. ☺

# New ASCC Secretaries

ASCC would like to welcome two new secretaries to the Case Management offices in West Memphis and Hot Springs. Their experience and "can do" attitude will be helpful in meeting the needs of clients in their local areas.

**Beverly Hodges**, new secretary in the West Memphis office, is a native Arkansan who has returned to her home state after living in Houston for five years. While in Texas, Beverly was employed as a medical record technician with



**Beverly Hodges in W. Memphis**

the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, a state agency which provides medical records in determining Social Security eligibility. Beverly hopes to expand upon this training in the future by attending nursing school. But for now she is learning about spinal cord disabilities and is very happy to be a part of ASCC.

The one thing that Beverly does miss about Texas is fried turkey – "it's the best thing in the world," according to Beverly – and she can't wait to have everyone try it. Until then, we would like to welcome Beverly to ASCC. Her experience and dedication will be great assets in the West Memphis area office.

**Bobbie S. Carroll** is the new secretary in the Hot Springs office. She came to ASCC from Hot Springs Rehabilitation Services (HSRS) where she was a receptionist. Prior to her employment at HSRS, Bobbie served in the U.S. Army Reserves for six years. She studied toward an Associates Degree in Business at Southern Arkansas University in Camden.



**Bobbie Carroll in Hot Springs**

Bobbie recently bought a lake house at White Oak and spends most of her time away from the office fishing, her favorite pastime. "I caught a three pound catfish last Saturday with a cricket – fun, fun!" Her other interests include her two grown sons and their families, tennis, reading and gardening. ASCC welcomes Bobbie with her positive attitude and abilities to the Hot Springs office. &

## John Gould Completes VISTA Affiliation

John Gould, a VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) volunteer at the Commission since December of 1994, has completed his VISTA affiliation. During his tenure John served as our Peer Support Coordinator and worked to make that program self-sufficient, with hospital staff now contacting trained Peer Consultants directly.

In addition, John developed a training manual on wheelchair repair and maintenance for individuals with spinal cord disabilities and their families. He traveled around the state doing training on wheelchair maintenance. The programs and resources that John developed at the Commis-

sion will continue to benefit us, long after he has left.

Luckily, though, John is not leaving. On June 1, 1997, John assumed a part-time position with ASCC as the Conference Coordinator for our 1998 "Living With Spinal Cord Disability: Strategies for a New Century" conference scheduled for May 1-2, 1998. In this role, John will coordinate conference activities as part of our grant from the Paralyzed Veterans of America Education and Training Foundation.

We look forward to hearing more from John (who is a newlywed – he and Cherie were married on April 26) about the conference. &

## Research Update

Dr. Edgar Garcia-Rill and Dr. John Houlé of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences have recently been awarded another \$1.3 million research grant to continue their investigation into the effects of spinal cord injury (SCI). Although their studies are done on animals, the information obtained will hopefully add to our understanding of SCI in humans.

Both Dr. Garcia-Rill and Dr. Houlé have discussed their research at ASCC's annual conferences in previous years. &

# New Fact Sheets Available From Craig Hospital

By Shirley McCluer, M.D., ASCC Medical Director

## SMOKING & LUNGS, SKIN AND BLADDER

"You most likely have heard all of the reasons to stop smoking — lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema, shorter life expectancy — yet, it is a pleasure, a stress reliever or an old friend you are unwilling to give up following your spinal cord injury. Or, you simply may be willing to take your chances despite all of the evidence of how harmful smoking is. Besides, quitting can be pretty difficult. For SCI survivors who smoke, however, there is even more bad news and more ill health effects than those cited for the general population. Specifically, there is an increased incidence of pressure sores, a decreased ability to heal following skin surgeries, and a greater likelihood of atelectasis (collapsed lung). Additionally, smoking further reduces the total lung capacity that is already decreased by SCI and reduces the amount of oxygen in the bloodstream used to power muscles and nourish tissues. Finally smoking can further increase an already heightened risk for bladder cancer."

*Thus begins a new fact sheet that is now available from Craig Hospital where much of the research on aging with SCI has been done.*

*Other available information topics include:*

## AM I READY FOR A VAN?

"Most SCI survivors who are used to driving a car aren't too excited about switching to a modified van. 'They're too big. They're too expensive. They're not very sporty or fun. They're too hard to drive.'

Sound like you? If so, you may have even more reasons not to switch. Yet increasing hassles, pain and fatigue may be telling you otherwise."

## OPTIMAL HEALTH: WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO GET IT

"You are over your rehab and are reaching a level of health that you feel good about. How do you keep healthy? What does being healthy mean, considering your spinal cord injury? Here are some ideas about what optimal health means and what you can do to keep healthy for a long, long time."

## SWITCHING TO A POWER CHAIR

"For many SCI survivors, recapturing independence is your sin-

gle most significant achievement. You view any concessions to that independence — accepting more help, using more or different equipment — as giving up, as failure, as the ultimate defeat. But it's hard to deny the fatigue and pain that may come from years of pushing a manual wheelchair. Switching to a power chair actually could be the way to maintain that independence..."

*You may request a free copy of these and other informational sheets from Craig Hospital by calling 1-800-5REHAB8 (573-4228) or contacting them via Internet at:*

**<http://www.craig.hospital.org/rehab>**



(Left to Right) Melanie Greer, Counselor Chris Hardesty and Brandy Romandia enjoyed swimming in the pool during Spina Bifida Camp at Camp Aldersgate. A total of 54 ASCC clients attended the camp during June, 1997.

# Pinnacle Mountain Adventure

When Sir Edmund Hillary was asked why he had climbed Mt. Everest, he uttered the immortal words, "Because it was there." ASCC client Mike Wagner had a similar motivation for the adventure he undertook this past April.

It all started in late Fall 1996 when Mike was challenged by a friend to climb up Pinnacle Mountain in Western Pulaski County. At first he laughed it off, but the idea soon took root and blossomed into a full fledged push for the summit on the morning of April 17, 1997.

Mike contacted several vendors and agencies (including ASCC) for donations of the materials and brain power necessary to get him to the top of the 1300 foot peak. Snell Orthotic Laboratory generously donated a pair of hard plastic leg protectors, or "chaps," which were custom-made to fit Mike. Southwestern Bell donated the use of a handheld cellular phone. ASCC donated a Jay Protector for Mike's hips and buttocks. Mike's ASCC Case Manager, John Baker, provided advice and support before and during the

climb. Mike contacted the Park headquarters and acquired permission to spend two nights on the mountain — as it turned out, he needed only one night.

He practiced "hiking" using only his arms for mobility. Mike designed and built two arm extenders to help lift his body up the rock steps he knew he would encounter on this notoriously steep trail. His goal was to do the climb completely independently, and that meant carrying all his own food, water and camping gear. To accomplish this, he designed and built a plastic sled in which he carried the supplies he would need for his time on the mountain.

At 7:15 on the morning of April 17, Mike started climbing the rocky trail. He climbed all day and finally reached the top just as the sun was setting. He had climbed for approximately 12 hours! But he did it all in one day, which was twice as fast as he had anticipated.

"I made it!" Mike wrote afterwards. "There I was, all alone, warm and comfortable in my sleeping bag on the top of Pinnacle Mountain. Hale-Bopp Comet was clearly visible in the north-western sky, a three-quarter moon to the south and bright stars everywhere. I felt as though I had really accomplished something. It felt great to be alive!"

He was interviewed by KTHV during the climb, which summoned encouragement and support from viewers throughout the Little Rock area. One man made several phone calls for Mike. Another man brought Mike coffee and donuts first thing the next morning. One kind woman brought him lunch while he was hiking back down.

The expressions on the faces of other hikers ran the gamut from quiet nods of the head to slack-

jawed amazement — people either said nothing or went out of their way to engage Mike in conversation. Several hikers offered to help Mike with various things. His ASCC Case Manager, who hiked part of the way up and most of the way down with Mike, observed, "I was a witness to the sense that something truly special was taking place!"

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*"I felt as though I had really accomplished something. It felt great to be alive!"*

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The next morning, he climbed back down in only six hours. The whole trip took half the total time Mike had allotted. The mountain vanquished, Mike is now searching for his next big adventure.

Since that time, Mike has been awarded a scholarship from the Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities to aid him in his studies at UALR.

ASCC congratulates Mike on his great adventure and extends best wishes for his future studies! &

## Christopher Reeve Named Vice Chairman of NOD

Christopher Reeve, injured in an equestrian accident in May, 1995, joined the Board of Directors of the National Organization on Disability (NOD) on June 20, 1997. NOD President Alan Reich commented, "Christopher is inspiring disabled persons everywhere to realize their full potential. No one better personifies the NOD message — 'It's ability, not disability, that counts' — than Christopher Reeve." &



**ASCC client Mike Wagner at Pinnacle Mountain's summit.**

# The Fish Were Biting !

The ninth annual "Wheels & Reels" fishing derby was held on Saturday, May 17, 1997, at Bryan Lake on Lyon College Campus in Batesville. Forty-five clients and family members participated and nearly everyone caught fish.

The weather was beautiful and a great time was had by all fishing and visiting. Lunch this year was fried chicken, which everyone really enjoyed.

Winners of the fishing derby were:

- Men's Division  
**Mike Mullen**, 1st place  
**Jessie Amick**, 2nd place
- Women's Division  
**Patricia Law**, 1st place  
**Charletta Hildersheim**, 2nd place
- Spina Bifida/Children's Division  
**James Durham**, 1st place  
**Danny Woodruff**, 2nd place. &



**Mike Mullen (left) with Charles Crowson (right).** Note the handy removable rod holder Mike made using plastic PVC pipe attached with clips to his chair armrest.

## New AmeriCorps Volunteers

ASCC has two new AmeriCorps volunteers, **Simmery Thompson** and **Sarah Tisdale**. Simmery is a 1997 graduate of Central High School. Simmery plans to attend nursing school at UALR in the fall. Sarah will be a sophomore at Hendrix College in the fall. She is a double major of Politics and Business and Economics.

The two volunteers will be working at the Commission through the fall of 1997. Their project, Veterans Helping Veterans, is a collaborative effort through the UAMS University Affiliated Program, the National Alliance of Veterans Family Service Organizations (NAVFSO) and ASCC. The Veterans Helping Veterans

program is a result of the Agent Orange Benefits Acts of 1996 (*see related article in the January 1997 issue of Spinal Courier*). This legislation, effective October 1, 1997, will, for the first time, grant veteran benefits to children of Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange. These benefits, which include lifetime health care benefits, a monthly allowance and vocational training, will be provided to children of Vietnam veterans born with Spina Bifida.

The Americorps volunteers will work with ASCC Spina Bifida families to help those who qualify to access and apply for services when they are available. ASCC welcomes Sarah and Simmery! &

## June Fish Fry

At the May 6, 1997, SCI Support Group meeting in Searcy, **Larry Wilson** decided it was time for a party. Little urging was needed and the group decided to have a fish fry in June at Riverfront Park. Group members signed up for the "pot luck" items they would bring and plans were made to contact those who were not there. Larry volunteered to provide the fish and be the chief cook.

About 25 people gathered Tuesday morning, June 3. A newly injured person had the opportunity to fellowship with the more experienced, and spouses had a chance to meet other spouses. The food was outstanding!

The White County Support group meets the first Tuesday of each month in the Conference room by the front door of White County Memorial Hospital. All persons with spinal cord disabilities are invited to attend. The meetings are from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Discussions include anything that is a concern to participants. For more information call **1-800-459-1517**. &

## Point of Departure

*Point of Departure* is a free newsletter designed to help the growing number of parents, advocates, educators and professionals working with transition age students with disabilities. One of the most serious barriers for young adults with disabilities who want to enter the "working world" is lack of knowledge about how the adult services system works.

*Point of Departure* is published twice a year by the TATRA Pro-

ject, a national technical assistance project serving parent training projects funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

Subscriptions are free of charge. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please contact the **TATRA Project at PACER Center, 4826 Chicago Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55417**; or call **612-827-2966**, voice/TDD; **612-827-3065**, FAX; or by e-mail: **mnpacer@edu.gte.net**

# Useful Hints

The following are several "hints" provided by ASCC clients or family members which should prove helpful to others.

**Amy Cunningham** of Searcy, a librarian who, true to her profession loves to read, became frustrated that she was unable to hold a book open, allowing her to turn pages with her mouthstick. Her son-in-law devised a solution.

He took one of her paperback books and cut the pages out close to the spine. After punching holes in the inner edge, metal book rings (individual rings similar to those used in three-ring binders) were placed in the holes, allowing the pages to lie flat. Amy was then able to read and turn the pages independently.

**Judy Buehrle** of Little Rock tells of getting a carbon monoxide "plus" detector recently. The family was shocked when the alarm began to sound at 2:00 a.m. After having representatives from

the fire department and the gas company investigate, they found that when they charged the batteries in her son's power chair, it gave off toxic gases. These were detected by the new device.

The Buehrles, who now recharge the batteries on a porch, wanted to pass the word so others can avoid being exposed to toxic gases.

**Donald Bragdon** of London shared a way to replace the suction cups on reachers rather than replace the reachers at a considerably higher cost. When the suction cups wear out:

1. Purchase correct size suction cups at hardware or craft store.
2. Remove the picture hanger from the suction cup.
3. Heat an ice pick and push a hole through the middle of the cup.
4. Screw in a replacement screw and nut and tighten. ♪

# Emergency Preparedness

Fire, fire!!! These words can make a person's blood run cold. What would you do if faced with a fire? Do you have an emergency plan, complete with emergency escape route, readily available for yourself and everyone in your home? What would you do if other types of disasters — floods, tornadoes or earthquakes — strike? **Planning ahead is vital** if you and your family are to be protected when faced with emergencies.

A very informative and handy checklist is available from the American Red Cross entitled, ***Preparing for Emergencies: A Checklist for People with Mobility Problems***. This pamphlet can help you develop an emergency plan and escape route, check your home for hazards and make an evacuation plan for home and car.

To get a copy of this pamphlet and other brochures about emergency preparedness, contact your local Red Cross chapter. ♪

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